



UN ATT CSP5, Geneva

August 26-30, 2019

Conference chair, I am Sheldon Clare, president of Canada's National Firearms Association. The NFA is the largest advocacy organization representing the rights of firearms owners and users in Canada. I would like to make five brief points regarding the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and civil ownership of firearms.

First, it is disappointing that Canada's Liberal government has decided to become a state party to the ATT. Hopefully, the next government will re-evaluate and rescind that decision. The NFA continues to assert that the ATT should have specifically excluded civilian firearms. The research from Canada has proven that efforts to control civilians and their firearms is expensive, bureaucratic, and has little to do with reducing criminal and terrorist misuse of firearms. Dr. Caillin Langmann's analysis of government data has demonstrated conclusively that none of Canada's firearms control efforts from the 1970s forward have had any effect upon reducing violent crime or suicide rates.¹ It is surely clear from recent and ongoing events around the world that there is a pressing need for civilians to have improved, not reduced, access to arms for defence.

Second, the activities of hunting, target shooting, collecting, self-defence, and the manufacture and sale of firearms, ammunition, and accessories support economies around the world. Both male and female Canadians of all ethnicities use firearms for all of these purposes. Women in particular can benefit from access to firearms for defence use. Canada and the United States are important examples of this major benefit, with hunting and other civil firearms related activities generating billions of dollars of economic gain.²

Third, Canadians, including aboriginal people, use firearms and ammunition responsibly in support of hunting, target shooting, history, and defence.³ Aboriginal people have long relied on firearms technology to assist hunting and trapping activities in support of subsistence lifestyles. The practice of denying groups of people firearm access, or limiting quality of technology to some groups of people, is simply bigotry and ethnic prejudice. Again, I implore you that UN efforts need to remain focused on State actors, terror groups, and areas of conflict, not on over regulating civilian firearm communities within stable States.

Fourth, so-called gun control is flawed policy that relies upon the failed practices of compulsory training and licensing individuals, registering firearms, classifying firearms, and ultimately confiscation of firearms. Regimes of control and oppression only affect the law abiding and do not change the practices of those who would do evil. These policies have not produced any public safety benefit in Canada.⁴

Finally, firearm owners, users, and industry have serious concerns about frequent misdirected attempts to attach civilian firearms ownership to problems of international mass violence. It is important to understand the difference between the violent activities of state actors and terrorists, and the peaceful nature of people who use firearms as tools in their cultural practices and everyday lives. Poor law that has no effect on bad behaviour reduces respect for the rule of law and encourages civil disobedience. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Langmann, Dr. Caillin, MD, PhD. "Canadian Firearms Legislation And Effects On Homicide 1974 To 2008", in *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, August 2012; vol. 27, 12: pp. 2303-2321., first published on February 10, 2012.

² The economic effect has been documented in Canada. Tourism Commission. *Sport Fishing and Game Hunting in Canada - An Assessment on the Potential International Tourism Opportunity*. CTC Research and Evaluation, October 2012, pages 3-29.

³ See Mauser, Prof. Gary. *Hubris in the North*, Fraser Institute digital Publication, June 2007., for an analysis of the Canadian situation regarding registration, and Gary Mauser, PhD "Armed Self Defense: the Canadian Case", *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol 24, No. 5, pp. 393-406, 1996. Available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1599862.

⁴ Langmann. See also Mauser, op cited.